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AUTHOR Blai, Boris, Jr.
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ABSTRACT

Two library use studies at Harcum Junior College are included in this document. The first report presents records gathered during four representative two-week, non-examination periods from 1967 to 1974, which show that a daily average of 19% of the students used the library. In 1974, however, average daily library use was 28%, almost double that of the prior three sample periods (15%) and half again greater than the average rate (19%) for all four sample periods; this is attributed to the fact that instructors are now giving examinations on required reading. The ratio of number of books circulated per student averaged 18:1 and the yearly collection-usage-rate averaged 45% during the past four academic years. The second report presents a comparative analysis of library circulations by subject category for five academic years, 1969-70 through 1972-73. Largest circulation categories reflect courses which are required of many students. Thus, literature, children's books, and social science books are the most frequently circulated because English is a core requirement for all programs offered, Early Childhood Education has been until quite recently the largest single curriculum offered, and social science courses are core requirements for 17 of the 26 programs offered at the college. (DC)

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Office of Research
IRR 74-27

(II)

HARCUM JUNIOR COLLEGE

BRYN MAWR, PENNA. 19010

Use of Harcum Library

1. Periodically since 1967 indicative records have been generated reflecting library usage by Harcum students. These are summarized below, and indicate library use during representative two-week, non-examination periods in the months of September, October and February. The percentages reported are the portion of the total student body using the library during the sampled periods.

Table 1: - Average Weekday Library Use

Month/Year	Average Daily Percentage
September 1967	12%
September 1969	20%
February 1970	14%
October 1974	28%
Average	19%

2. Evidence gathered over a span of almost 35 years has revealed that only a minority of students actually make use of their campus libraries. As Jain & Dewesse noted in their 1968 "Report on a Statistical Study of Book Use, Supplemented with a Bibliography of Library Use Studies" (ERIC Research in Education, Vol. 3. No. 9. Sept. 1968), there has been mounting evidence over the years that the notion of the academic library being the "heart of the campus" is one of America's higher education myths.

3. As Howard Clayton noted in "The Unacademic Library" (College & University, Fall 1967: Vol. 43, No. 1) the library, as the "heart of the campus" suffers from widespread lack of use which he believes to be particularly regrettable,....."for the library is the only place where the student can come in contact with the tools and materials that lead to systematic methods of intellectual problem-solving." Unfortunately, as Clayton concludes....."some teachers believe their teaching is so inspired that this alone causes students to do exhaustive independent reading."

4. Regrettably, such is not the case, for...."considerable evidence accumulated over a period of 25 years, (Gaskill, H. V., 1934: "An Analytical Study of the Use of a College Library," Library Quarterly, IV, October 1934; pp 564-587 to Lieberman, Irving 1960 "Libraries & Museums", Encyclopedia of Educational Research, 3rd edition. Chester W. Harris, editor, New York, Macmillan Co. 1960 pp. 770-777), as well as countless observations by numerous librarians, reveals that items on required reading lists are virtually never read unless an instructor holds periodic examinations on the contents". (IRR 69-8).

5. In view of the above-cited facts, it is particularly gratifying to note that during this current academic year the average weekday library use is almost double that of the prior three sample periods (15%), and is half again greater than the average rate (19%) for the four sample periods noted in Table II It is a further hopeful expectation that instructors currently do hold periodic examinations on the contents of required reading lists, and that

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this markedly improved rate will continue to be characteristic of the library-use rate at Harcum.

6. A further dimension of library use is to be found in monthly circulation statistics. Expressed in terms of yearly student populations, the ratios of number of books circulated per student during the past 4 academic years indicates a substantial stability, averaging a ratio of 18 books circulated per student.

Table 2: - Ratio of Books Circulated/Student

	1970-71	1971-72	1972-73	1973-74
Ratios =	16:1	18:1	19:1	18:1

7. An additional 'positive' statistic relating to usage of Harcum's learning resource center is noted in the yearly collection-usage-rate which averaged 45%.

Table 3: - Library Collection-usage-rate

	1970-71	1971-72	1972-73	1973-74
Usage rate =	47%	41%	43%	39%

8. Despite the fact that considerable numbers of books per student have been circulated throughout these four academic years (Table 2), the collection-usage-rate (Table 3) 'peaked' in 1970-71. However, since the collection-usage-rate in each of the three subsequent years was less than 1970-71, and books circulated per student was higher than the 1970-71 rate, this is interpreted to mean that although fewer books within the total collection were circulated, these were utilized more often in the latter three academic years.

9. In summary, the following three general conclusions are drawn:

(1) The average weekly use of the library during non-examination periods by Harcum students evidenced a healthy increase since 1970-71; particularly noteworthy in academic 1973-74.

(2) Following academic 1970-71, a sustained increase is noted in books circulated per student.

(3) The library collection-usage-rate throughout this 4 year period has averaged a healthy 45%.

10. Further long-range trends in Harcum's learning resource center utilization will be reported in future indicative records documents.

Boris Blai, Jr., Ed. D.
Director, Institutional Research

October 1974

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Office of Research
IRR 75-2

(II)

Library Circulations
1969-70 through 1973-74

1. In IRR 74-27, "Use of Harcum Library", three general conclusions were drawn:

"(1) The average weekly use of the library during non-examination periods by Harcum students evidenced a healthy increase since 1970-71; particularly noteworthy in 1973-74.

(2) Following academic 1970-71, a sustained increase is noted in books circulated per student.

(3) The library collection-usage-rate throughout this 4-year period has averaged a healthy 45%.

Further long-range trends in Harcum's learning resource center utilization will be reported in future indicative records documents."

2. This report addresses itself to one such dimension of library operations — a detailed comparative analysis of library circulations for the 5 academic years 1969-70 through 1972-73. This will permit rather specific and detailed comparisons to be made by individual faculty members as well as administrative/staff personnel. All percentages reported in Table 1 are rounded off and refer to the number of circulations of the particular area compared to the total circulations that academic year.

3. The areas in Table I are listed in descending order of frequency of total circulations for the five-year period, thus revealing the greatest referral-usage among the Harcum students. The table further reveals that the ratio of books circulated per student has varied from a "low" of 13/student in 1969-1970 to a "high" of 19:1 in 1972-1973, with an average over the five academic years of 17:1. This is considered to be a substantial, sustained usage-rate.

4. For any of the academic years 1970-71 through 1973-74, to determine the actual number of volumes circulated within any of the 13 categories, one need only multiply the percentage number appearing in any cell by the grand total circulation for that year.

5. Scanning Table I throughout this five academic years period, there is evident a generally stable pattern of percentage usage within each of the 13 listed areas. The greatest variability in usage is noted in Children's books (9%) - from 19% to 18%; closely followed by Literature (8%); from 32% to 24%. The least variation is noted in both Language & General Works; some .3%.

6. As Table I further reveals, during this five academic years period the largest single area of library collection circulation was Literature (28%). This is to be anticipated

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at Harcum as English is a core requirement for all programs offered. Early Childhood Education, until the introduction of the Animal Technician program in 1972, consistently was the largest single curriculum offered. This fact undoubtedly is reflected in the second highest percentage of circulations — Children's books (24%).

7. Although Social Service "majors" at Harcum are a small percentage of enrollment (5%), circulations of social science books is the third largest category among these 13 areas (17%). This again reflects the fact that social science courses are core requirements within 17 of the 26 programs of study currently offered by the College.

Table I. Library Collection Circulations - by Areas: 1969-70 through 1973-74

Category	Total Circulation	%	1969-1970	%	1970-1971	1971-1972	1972-1973	1973-1974
Literature (800)	13,682	28%	2302	28%	32%	29%	24%	28%
Children's books	11,663	24%	2273	28%	23%	25%	26%	19%
Soc. Science (300)	8,055	17%	931	11%	17%	19%	17%	19%
Philosophy (100)	2,531	5%	476	6%	5%	6%	5%	5%
Applied Science (600)	2,434	5%	331	4%	4%	4%	6%	6%
Fiction	2,315	5%	470	6%	4%	4%	6%	5%
Pure Science (500)	1,986	4%	290	4%	2%	3%	6%	7%
History (900)	1,743	4%	371	5%	4%	3%	3%	3%
Fine Arts (700)	1,742	4%	247	3%	3%	3%	4%	5%
Biography (920)	1,168	2%	311	4%	4%	2%	2%	5%
Religion (200)	546	1%	135	2%	1%	1%	1%	1%
Language (400)	171	.4%	30	.4%	.3%	.8%	.1%	.1%
Gen. works (000)	148	.3%	51	.6%	.2%	.2%	.4%	.1%
Grand Totals Circulations	48,184		8,208		10,096	10,610	10,125	9,148
Books Circulated Student ratio	17:1		13:1		16:1	18:1	19:1	18:1

8. Coupled with the three general conclusions noted in paragraph 1 above, as Table I reveals, on the average 9637 books annually have been circulated during the five academic years 1969-70 through 1973-74 — a very substantial usage-rate of 17 volumes per student per year.

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Boris Blai, Jr., Ed. D.
Director of Research

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